



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF EDMOND

FIRST LOOK

JULY 2020



PENTECOST



LIFT: DRIVE-IN



VBS



SERVE DAY



SERVE DAY



FEATURE ARTICLE:

Gather for Community
Our Vision

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STUDENT MINISTRY'S LIFT:Drive-In

CONVERSATION WITH PASTORS

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MISSION MOMENT

Gather for Community

by: Eric Laverentz

We are steadily progressing toward a sense of at least some normality.

But what's normal?

One of the authors I quote from time to time is Watchman Nee. He was a Chinese pastor, evangelist and writer who died in a Communist prison. Watchman Nee talked about the "normal Christian life" which meant normative, rather than routine or common. Too many Christians, Nee said, aspire only to a normal, comfortable routine life—when God's call for us is anything but. Watchman Nee said we look to Jesus for our 'normative' life. He is the norm toward which we should aspire and there are plenty of others who followed His example toward whom we can look as well:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

- Hebrews 12:1-2

There is no doubt that we endured (and are still enduring) a time of hardship and trial—Covid, the loneliness and isolation of the quarantine, economic hardship, loss of milestone events and long-awaited plans, and overwhelming racial tension for all. It has felt a little like a crucifixion. We know that Jesus did not choose crucifixion for Himself. It was His

MISSION

GATHER FOR WORSHIP & COMMUNITY
GROW IN INTIMACY & UNDERSTANDING
GO TO SERVE & SHARE

Father's will and He endured the cross. But from the cross came a resurrection, new life. And in that new life Jesus was glorified. We should look to this pattern of crucifixion, resurrection, and glorification. As Watchman Nee would say, this is normative—although it certainly does not feel normal or routine. There is very little about the last few months that feels normal or routine. And we are anxious to get back to that. However, we need to ask what does Jesus's normal look like? What should be normative for us? If we just seek to return to business as usual, we will cheat ourselves of the new life and the glorification that comes from a crucifixion—like Peter, Andrew, James and John trying to fish again the waters of Galilee.

"What are you doing, Jesus?" has been the foremost question on my mind throughout these difficult months. I have prayed for our Church more and I have prayed for many of you more during these last few months than I have at any time. And God is absolutely faithful. There are amazing signs of new life everywhere we look... although some of it looks far from routine or common.

- We have more children taking part in our 'virtual' VBS held in the homes of families than we have had in several years in our traditional 'on-site' VBS.

- We had an amazing "Serve Day" for City Rescue Mission where we filled a truck with supplies and we gave away one of the greatest single financial gifts in the history of First Pres.

- We continue to see our reach expand and grow through the live-streaming of worship. God was so good to provide this system and help us perfect it before Covid.

- Thanks to your generosity and Jesus' faithfulness, our giving continues to be strong. So far this year our giving is nearly \$200,000 over our spending. Unsolicited, generous gifts continue to come with regularity.

- My conversation with the Pastors talking about George Floyd's murder and racial disparity has been viewed on Facebook alone over 7,000 times and on many other media as well. We are pursuing relationships with African American congregations. Over 30 of you have signed up to be a part of that. Our first conversation is happening the last few days of June. The Holy Spirit is on the move here and it is important for the Church to seize the opportunity to declare the Gospel into our brokenness, rather than allow those consumed with hate and rage to have the final word.

- Our search for a Next Generation Pastor is proceeding on pace and we hope to have news soon.

- We see new faces in our sanctuary for worship and continue to see many people join us online.

- On July 12, we are planning to open up more with Adult SS, nursery, larger groups, and we'll be serving communion.

Praise God for how He continues to provide for First Pres! There are some challenges as well. Many of you will not be able or won't

feel comfortable returning to the building for some time. We have had to postpone our much anticipated Israel trip. It's easy to feel estranged from folks and get into routines that take us away from our Church family. Communication sometimes has been strained. As a Shepherd, I worry about what sheep have fallen away from the flock. I know Sunday School classes that have met via Zoom have waned. We are desperately missing our Worship Choir and handbells. With the Church being partially open, the staff and lead-

ership is working hard to get reacquainted and rebuild collegiality. I am also aware of being very tired. And I know I am not the only one. I have pastored many other pastors lately and some have pastored me.

I have no doubt that Covid and everything around it will be a winnowing process. Like so many businesses that have been lost, there will be congregations that fade. But I have the strong sense we will be emerging stronger and more focused on our vision of "New Life Through Jesus for Edmond and the World." But

it is important we seek the normal of Jesus, His standard, by looking to Him rather than returning to our historical normal, our routine. Let's make this crucifixion count for something, let's seek the new life and the glory God promises for those who endure and hope.



FPCE | DISCIPLESHIP

We are hoping to start Adult Sunday School on Sunday, July 12. See our insert in this month's First Look for the class options. Please remember that our leaders will ask you to practice social distancing, and some teachers may require masks for all who participate. As always, keep in touch with FPCE through social media and our weekly

Enews for updates related to Covid 19. If we need to increase restrictions or to further open the church, we'll let everyone know!

FPCE | CONGREGATIONAL CARE

During this time of transitioning out of quarantine, we want you to know that our pastors, staff, Deacons, Elders, and Stephen Ministers are here to help! Please don't hesitate to let us know if you need assistance or would like to receive a call from a representative of the church. We are here to serve you! 405-341-3602



SUMMER
WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY
"WITH CHILDCARE"
WEDNESDAYS at 9:15AM
JULY 8 - AUG. 12
LIVE AND ONLINE
Please Register:
[FPCEDMOND.ORG/EVENTS](https://fpcedmond.org/events)

Women's Summer Bible Study

Join us for "Wednesdays in the Word!" We will be watching 6 video sessions from John Ortberg's All the Places to Go...How Will you Know?

Wednesdays:

July 8, 15, 22, 29, August 5, 12
at 9:15AM

Live and Online

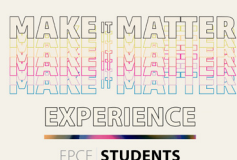
There will be discussion and prayer time with NO book and NO homework. Come when you can. All women are invited so please bring your friends!

Registration is encouraged and available online at fpcedmond.org/events or on our app. Childcare is available, but must be reserved.

You can still watch online!

LIVE STREAM
SUNDAYS AT 9:00 & 11:15AM

CONNECT ONLINE    



Student Ministry's "Make It Matter" Camp Experience

We are excited to offer the "Make It Matter Experience!" This is our local camp with 3 different ways to experience it to best serve all our families. Mark your calendars for July 20-23 and take a look at our website for more details. No matter if you are with us all week, or you pick and choose which aspects your family decides is safest for your student, or you join us virtually all week it will be a great week as we process the Word, Way, Will, and Work of God! We are boldly praying and anticipating New Life, through Jesus. Register for the experience level that works best for you today at fpcedmond.org/events or on our app.

FIRST, BY THE NUMBERS

- Average attendance of LIFT: Drive-In has been 42
- Average Serve Day attendance: around 200
- Serve Day donations filled up an 18' Box Truck:
 - Grocery Items: 992 lbs
 - Health & Hygiene Items: 192 lbs
- Conversation with Pastors Live Stream event on June 2, 2020
 - Web/App Live - 114, Web/App Post Watches - 42
 - Facebook - 7,000 views, 41 shares, 70 Peak Views, 576 Thru Plays
- Virtual VBS: 180 kids registered, 53 hosts
- Serve Day: BBQ meals consumed - 159
 - Ice Cream Cones enjoyed - 120
 - Other Items: 1,475 lbs
- YouTube - 10 Live, 45 total

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT

LIFT: DRIVE-IN

The student ministry at FPCE is so grateful for the Core Values that have been established here! As a team, we use the Core Values to lean into all that God has for us as a ministry. We asked each of our Summer 2020 interns which core value they are learning to live out more and how they see the FPCE Student Ministry living out that core value. Here is what they said:



Brynnan Duncan: One of my favorite things about interning with the student ministry is hanging out with our students. We get

to have so much fun building relationships and encouraging students in their faith. Every week girls have a different hang out, we have picnics in the park, ice cream and even fun pops dates! I love getting to spend time with each amazing young woman and watching them grow in their relationships with Christ! Each of them are so unique and have their own individual talents and gifts.



Hannah Matthies: I get so excited about the way our Student Ministry at First Presbyterian is practicing creating and sending leaders. Our goal at the end of the day with every student is that they know their worth and value in Christ and that they have

confidence to share the love of God with others! It's so amazing to watch students grow in their faith with us here and get excited to invest in others around Edmond and the world. It's been the coolest experience the last three years watching students go on to be leaders in their college communities and take on internships and become leaders in other capacities to reach people for Jesus. Our student ministry does so well in equipping students with the word of God and providing leaders to invest in them and invite them into new spaces to serve the church and share Christ. It never gets old seeing students live into their identity in Christ and their leadership potential with the gifts God has blessed them with.



Travis Robnett: Our High School Ministry is engaging in a summer-long Bible study over Mark. Mark has the perfect number of chapters to cover the summer. By the end of the study, students will have sufficient knowledge over one of the synoptic gospels (Mark and Matthew). Beginning with John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus and ending with Jesus Christ's resurrection, Mark covers the basics of the Christian faith and the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. My hope is to see the knowledge of scripture impact students' everyday lives and be able to relate student ministry activities



and current events (personal and societal) into our study of scripture.



Jake McKinnon: Serving community is in the DNA of the First Pres Student Ministry. Most recently we had several students rally

behind the Serve Day for the City Rescue Mission, helping with set up, drop-off, and loading up the truck full of donations. Every summer we take students to Generate which is the mission camp we go to. Generate offers us a unique opportunity to have the camp experience, worship, speakers, and community, while allowing us to go off site and do service projects during the day. Even though we will be staying local this summer, that will not inhibit us from serving community! We are planning to partner with Restore OKC, The Ronald McDonald House, Central Middle School, and others to continue this tradition of serving community throughout the summer!



• LIFT FPCE on Facebook



• fpce_students on Instagram

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

2020

Beginning Sunday, July 12, the following adult Sunday School classes will be offered for this summer (through August 2) from 10:00-11:00am:

Christian Worldview - *Bill Ball - Fellowship Hall*

Americans are divided over many things today: politics, race, economics, ethics; and Christians seem to be divided along the same lines as everyone else. Yet Jesus prayed that we would be one as He and the Father are one. To bring about unity, the issues that divide us need to be frankly discussed among followers of Christ. But before this we need to make sure that we are starting from the same place. This will be our first goal in this class - to attempt to spell out what a Christian worldview is. Our second goal will be to apply this worldview to the various issues of the day. Hopefully there will be lively discussion as well as solid biblical truth. The class will be taught and led by Bill Ball, retired pastor and instructor in New Testament and Theology at the College of Biblical Studies in Houston, TX.

James- the Proverbs of the New Testament - *Lee Schmidt - Room 2115*

An intensely practical book, filled with exhortations about how we, as Christians, should live our lives now that we have been given new life in Jesus. Filled with allusions to His teachings, and quotations of Jesus, it is packed with 'imperatives,' vitally important points, with which many of us are familiar: Every good and perfect gift is from above..., do not merely listen to the Word...do what it says..., faith without deeds is dead..., and much more. The objective of James is not a theological presentation of the Bible, but is written to Believers with the goal of helping them lead faithful lives as followers of Jesus. This class practices community, fellowship and discussion (koinonia) and all are welcome as we break open this challenging Book as a guide to a life worthy of our calling.

Study of Job - *Ken Rees – Room 2124*

Continuing the study of Job from spring semester, come and experience the dramatic reading of scripture in a new series on Job. Have you had enough of the health and wealth gospel...Cozy religion...Bible platitudes...Cheap grace? Intriguing presentation followed by a guided discussion. Our "script" will be Eugene Peterson's translation, with some omissions to fit the available time.

Faith 2:42 - *Jayne and Bill Roberts - Room 2126*

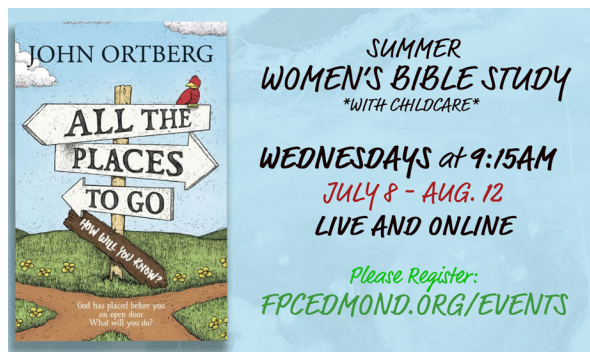
A class for young adults in their 20s/30s seeking discussion-based Bible study and a place to meet new friends. Join us!

Family Matters - *Laura and Chris Burton*

*Meeting at the Edmond Railyard every 2nd Sunday of the month for lunch @ 12:30! We are also hosting various social gatherings throughout the summer to keep in touch, watch each other's parenting tactics, and be in good company! It's always fun and filled with laughter. Join our Facebook page: FPCE Family Matters and keep up-to-date with us!

SUMMER EVENTS

2020



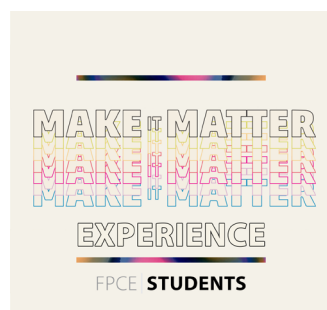
Summer Women's Bible Study

Summer Women's Bible Study offered at FPCE in-person and online! Bring a friend Wednesday mornings to our building or sign up for an online discussion group. We know that moms need spiritual and physical rejuvenation, and that's why we are providing childcare throughout this study! Sign up today at fpcedmond.org/events or on our app.

ALL women are invited for community and discussion over John Ortberg's study, All the places to go...How will you know?

Very rarely in the Bible does God command someone to "stay." He opens a door, and then he invites us to walk through it—into the unknown. How we choose to respond will ultimately determine the lives we will lead and the people we will become.

Six-session video study designed to open our eyes to the opportunities God places before us every day and gives encouragement to step out in faith and embrace extraordinary opportunities that await!



Student Ministry's "Make It Matter" Camp Experience

We are excited to offer the "Make It Matter Experience!" This is our local camp with 3 different ways to experience it to best serve all our families. Mark your calendars for July 20-23rd and take a look at our website for more details. No matter if you are with us all week, or you pick and choose which aspects your family decides is safest for your student, or you join us virtually all week it will be a great week as we process the Word, Way, Will, and Work of God! We are boldly praying and anticipating New Life, through Jesus. Register today at fpcedmond.org/events or on our app.



Student Ministry's LIFT: Drive-In

Students and Families! Get excited about LIFT: Drive-In! Bring a car, or bring a lawn chair and gather in fun socially-distanced spaces! ALL students and families welcome! **What is LIFT: Drive-In?** You can expect an epic LIFT LIVE custom movie each week (complete with a message from God's Word), worship that will re-center your heart on Jesus, and virtual games!

When is it? 8-9:45pm in the FPCE Backyard June 17, 24 and July 8, 15, and 29!